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REAGAN AIDES LOOK TO A BIGGER ROLE IN LATIN CONFLICTS

AID IS CALLED INADEQUATE

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WASHINGTON, June 2—Senior Reagan Administration officials, convinced that the United States military presence in Central America is too small to realize the policy goals proclaimed by President Reagan, are considering an increase in American involvement.

No final decisions have been made, according to senior national security officials, but options under review include more military advisers for El Salvador, expanded military cooperation with Honduras and the renewal of military aid to Guatemala.

A senior Administration official said, however, that short of a provocative change in the balance of power in Central America, such as a large influx of Cuban forces or an invasion of Honduras by Nicaragua, the United States was unlikely to increase its military presence greatly. He said the Administration remained committed to keeping American combat forces out of the conflicts in Central America.

Reagan 'Given the Facts'

Mr. Reagan and his top national security advisers recently reviewed a proposal to expand United States military activity in Honduras, national security officials said. They added that the plan, which they declined to discuss in detail, went "substantially beyond" the previously announced agreement to send more than 180 advisers to Honduras, tripling the present number, and open a training camp for Salvadoran soldiers there.

An Administration official, asked about the national security officials' comments, said tonight that Mr. Reagan was "given the facts on certain countries" at White House meetings this week, but added, "There's no consideration at present of increasing personnel, funding, or the level of U.S. involvement."

Praise for Departing Diplomats

Secretary of State George P. Shultz announced today that President Reagan intended to nominate Thomas R. Pickering, a career diplomat who is now Ambassador to Nigeria, as the new envoy to El Salvador. Mr. Pickering, if confirmed by the Senate, would replace Deane R. Hinton.

The announcement was made at a news conference at the State Department at which Mr. Shultz praised Mr. Hinton and the departing Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas O. Enders. One official said Mr. Shultz had been "irritated" over what several senior officials regarded as a deliberate effort by some White House officials over the weekend to denigrate the department and Mr. Enders and Mr. Hinton. Mr. Shultz announced last Friday that Mr. Enders would be replaced by Langhorne A. Motley, a political appointee who has been Ambassador to Brazil.

Senior officials said a consensus had emerged within the Administration that the commitment of American resources in Central America needed to be increased to bring it into balance with the policy aims of Mr. Reagan.

Specifically, they said, the military assistance to El Salvador and Honduras has not been sufficient to reverse guerrilla advances in El Salvador or prevent the expansion of Cuban and Soviet influence in the region.

A More Assertive Stand

They said the Administration plans to be more assertive in opposing Congressional cuts in American aid to El Salvador and legislation in the House that would end the financing of insurgents in Nicaragua.

The dismissal last week of Mr. Enders as the State Department's senior official dealing with Latin America resulted in part from dissatisfaction with his efforts to negotiate a compromise with the House Foreign Affairs Committee on help for the insurgents, the officials said.

The Defense Department, according to White House officials, has taken the lead in advocating a tougher stand by the Administration in its relations with Congress, frequently clashing with the State Department.

While Mr. Enders was negotiating with House Democrats last month, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, in a letter to the chairmen of the Senate and House intelligence committees, vehemently opposed the House bill to terminate covert assistance to the rebels in Nicaragua and provide \$80 million in overt aid to Central American nations to intercept arms shipments to guerrillas in El Salvador. Defense Department officials said.

Mr. Weinberger, the officials said, maintained that it would be "totally unfeasible" for Central American nations, acting alone, to block the flow of weapons.

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